

SAINT CATHARINE DE RICCI,

V., O.S.D. (A.D. 1589)

FEBRUARY 13

The Riccis are an ancient family, which still exist in a flourishing condition in Tuscany. Peter de Ricci, the father of our saint, was married to Catharine Bonza, a lady of suitable birth. The saint was born at Florence in 1522, and was baptized Alexandrina, but she took the name of Catharine at her religious profession. Having lost her mother in her infancy, she was formed to virtue by a very pious god-mother, and whenever she was missing, she was always to be found on her knees in some secret part of the house.

When she was between six and seven years old, her father placed her in the Convent of Monticelli, near the gates of Florence, where her aunt, Louisa de Ricci, was a nun. This place was a paradise to her: at a distance from the noise and tumult of the world, she served God without impediment or distraction. After some years her father took her home. She continued her usual exercises in the world as much as she was able; but the interruptions and dissipation, inseparable from her station, gave her so much uneasiness that, with the consent of her father, which she

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obtained with great difficulty, in the year 1535, when she was fourteen, she received the religious veil in the convent of Dominicanesses at Prat, in Tuscany, to which her uncle, Father Timothy de Ricci, was director.

For two years she suffered inexpressible pains under a complication of violent distempers, and the remedies themselves served only to increase her suffering. These sufferings she sanctified by the interior dispositions with which she bore them, and which she nourished principally by constant meditation on the Passion of Christ, in which she found incredible comfort and joy. After the recovery of her health, which seemed miraculous, she studied more perfectly to die to her senses, and to advance in a penitential life and spirit, in which God had begun to conduct her, by practicing the greatest austerities which were compatible with the obedience she had professed. She fasted two or three days a week on bread and water, and sometimes passed the whole day without taking any nourishment, and chastised her body with disciplines and a sharp iron chain which she wore next to her skin. Her obedience, humility, and meekness were still more admirable than her spirit of penance. The least shadow of distinction or commendation gave her inexpressible uneasiness and confusion, and she would have rejoiced to be able to lie hid in the center of the earth, in order to be entirely unknown to and blotted out of the hearts of all mankind, such were the sentiments of annihilation and contempt of herself in which she constantly lived.

It was by profound humility and perfect interior self-denial that she learned to vanquish sin and inordinate self-love. But this victory over herself, and purgation of her affections, was completed by a perfect spirit of prayer. For by the union of her soul with God, and the establishment of the absolute reign of His love in her heart, she was dead to and disengaged from all earthly things. And in one act of sublime prayer she advanced more than by a hundred exterior practices in the purity and ardor of her desire to do constantly what was most agreeable to God, to lose no occasion of practicing every heroic virtue, and of vigorously resisting all that was evil. Prayer, holy meditation, and contemplation were the means by which God imprinted in her soul sublime ideas of His heavenly truths, the strongest and most tender sentiments of all virtues, and the most burning desire to give all to God, with an incredible affection for suffering contempt and poverty for Christ. What she chiefly labored to obtain, by meditating on His life and sufferings, and what she most earnestly asked of Him, was that He would be pleased, in His mercy, to purge her affections of all poison of the inordinate love of creatures, and engrave in her His most holy and divine image, both exterior and interior — that is to say, both in her conversation and her affections, so that she might be animated, and

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might think, speak, and act by His Most Holy Spirit.

The saint was chosen, very young, first, mistress of the novices, then sub-prioress, and, at age twenty-five, was appointed perpetual prioress. The reputation of her extraordinary sanctity and prudence drew her many visits from a great number of bishops, princes, and Cardinals — among others. Saint Philip Neri and Saint Catharine of Ricci, having for some time exchanged many letters, to satisfy their mutual desire of seeing each other, while Saint Philip Neri was detained in Rome, she appeared to him in a vision, and they conversed together for a considerable time, each doubtless being in a rapture. Saint Philip Neri, though most careful in giving credit to or in publishing visions, declared that Catharine de Ricci, while living, had appeared to him in a vision.

Most wonderful were the raptures of Saint Catharine in meditating on the Passion of Christ, which was her daily exercise, to which she totally devoted herself every week from Thursday noon to three o'clock in the afternoon on Friday.

Saint Catharine of Ricci practiced the art of true devo-

tion, which consists very much in a familiar and easy habit of accompanying exterior actions and business with a pious attention to the Divine Presence, frequent secret aspirations, and a constant union of the soul with God. This she practiced at her work, in the exterior duties of her house and office, in her attendance to the sick (which was her favorite employment, and which she usually performed on her knees), and in the tender care of the poor over the whole country. But this did not hinder the exercises of contemplation, which were her most constant employment. Therefore, retirement and silence were her delight, in order to entertain herself with the Creator of all things, and by devout meditation, kindling in her soul the fire of heavenly love, she was never able to satiate the enthusiasm of her desire in adoring and praising the immense greatness and goodness of God.

After a long illness, she passed from this mortal life to everlasting bliss and the possession of the object of all her desires, on the Feast of the Purification of Our Lady, on February 2, 1589, at age 67. The ceremony of her beatification was performed by Clement XII in 1732, and that of her canonization by Benedict XIV in 1746. Her festival is deferred to February 13.

NEWS FROM THE APOSTOLATE

Holy Pilgrimages

We had the amazing opportunity this year to attend not one but two canonizations with our pilgrims. First we went to Rome for the canonization of Padre Pio in June. We began our awe-inspiring journey visiting shrines and holy places in the eternal city. Then we attended the canonization ceremony which took place in St. Peter's Square. Hundreds of thousands of people attended, filling both the square and the Via Conciliazione. We extended our journey by traveling to San Giovanni Rotondo and Pietrelcina to visit the shrine and birthplace of St. Padre Pio. We also visited numerous other shrines and churches of saints throughout central Italy.

We then took a second group of pilgrims to Guadalupe, Mexico, in July for the Canonization of Juan Diego where we attended the ceremony at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Many bishops and priests from around the world were there as we traveled in the footsteps of Juan Diego. Going on to Puebla, the home of 365 chapels, we visited as many as we could in one day.

Distribution

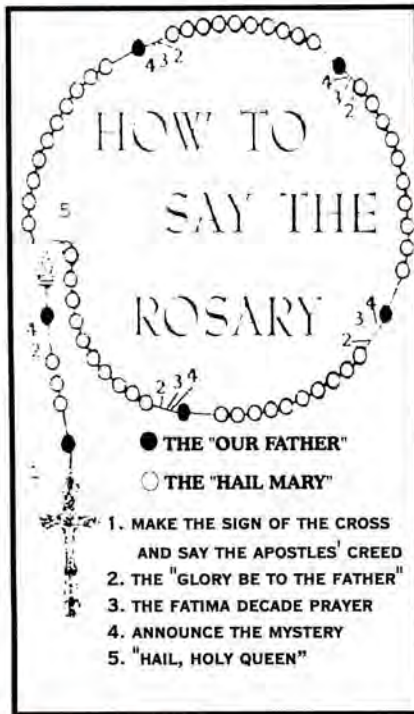
From July 23 to 28, a few of Our Lady's volunteers, along with some staff, traveled to Toronto, Ontario to distribute Apostolate literature and sacramentals at World Youth Day week. We distributed over 215,000 pieces which included special World Youth Day bookmarks (sample enclosed), a variety of prayer cards, Green Scapulars, rosaries and How to Pray the Rosary leaflets.

It was a wonderful opportunity to give Marian devotional material to the many thousands of young people from around the world. All of the material contained our phone number and web address and we have already received some contact from them.

A Special Occasion

Thursday, August 22, 2002 was a celebration for our very own "Fatima Priest", Father Nicholas Gruner, who celebrated the 26th Anniversary of his ordination. Joined by his staff and volunteers, Father attended a luncheon in his honor.

HOW TO SAY THE ROSARY



The Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell; the third day He arose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. *Amen.*

The Our Father

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us: and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. *Amen.*

The Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with Thee; blessed art Thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of Thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. *Amen.*

The Glory Be to the Father

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. *Amen.*

The Fatima Decade Prayer

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins; save us from the fires of hell; lead all souls to Heaven, especially those most in need.

Hail, Holy Queen

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy. Hail our life, our sweetness and our hope. To Thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To Thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, Most gracious Advocate, Thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile show unto us the blessed Fruit of Thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let Us Pray

O God, Whose only begotten Son, by His life, death, and resurrection has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life; grant, we beseech Thee, that meditating upon these mysteries of the most Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain, and obtain what they promise through the same Christ our Lord. *Amen*

THE MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY

The praying of each decade is accompanied by meditation on one of the fifteen "Mysteries".

Joyful Mysteries

(Mondays and Thursdays; also Sundays from beginning of Advent until Lent)

First Joyful Mystery: *The Annunciation (St. Luke 1:28)*

Second Joyful Mystery: *The Visitation (St. Luke 1:41,42)*

Third Joyful Mystery: *The Nativity of Our Lord (St. Luke 2:7)*

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Dear Father Gruner,

I had been looking forward to hearing from you again and was delighted to receive 2 packages from you on consecutive days. I greatly enjoyed reading *The Fatima Crusader* and was most impressed with your excellent article on the Third Secret which I read first of all. I have always understood and believed that in order to be a Catholic it is essential to firmly believe **all** the sacred dogmas and doctrines of the Church both of faith and morals. Your article is very perceptive and brought me much encouragement. I also greatly enjoyed the other articles which I totally agree with. *The Fatima Crusader* is a wonderful magazine. With all good wishes and an assurance of prayers.

R. Bone, England

Dear Father Gruner,

I want to thank you for all the wonderful work you do for Our Blessed Mother. Your tremendous courage and holy boldness, without a doubt, brings Her Immaculate Heart great solace and joy.

Please know that you have my deepest heartfelt thanks and continuous prayers. I am one person, whom you have never met, that wants you to know that your tremendous efforts are not going unnoticed, and that you are a true blessing and inspiration from God for all of us faithful around the world.

Thank you again Father Gruner and God bless you, and may you forever find peace and comfort in the refuge of Our Blessed Mother's Immaculate Heart.

Sincerely, Donna F., PA

Dear Father,

May the world, the Vatican and the bishops join us in praying and working to "finally" OBEY the requests of Our Lady of Fatima and we may have a consecrated Russia.

Humberto P., FL

HOW TO SAY THE ROSARY

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Fourth Joyful Mystery: *The Presentation* (St. Luke 2:22-23)

Fifth Joyful Mystery: *Finding Jesus in the Temple* (St. Luke 2:46)

Sorrowful Mysteries

(Tuesdays and Fridays; also Sundays during Lent)

First Sorrowful Mystery: *The Agony in the Garden* (St. Luke 22:44-45)

Second Sorrowful Mystery: *The Scourging at the Pillar* (St. John 19:1)

Third Sorrowful Mystery: *The Crowning with Thorns* (St. Matthew 27:28-29)

Fourth Sorrowful Mystery: *The Carrying of the Cross* (St. John 19:17)

Fifth Sorrowful Mystery: *The Crucifixion* (St. Luke 23:46)

Glorious Mysteries

(Wednesdays and Saturdays; also Sundays from Easter until Advent)

First Glorious Mystery: *The Resurrection* (St. Mark 16:6)

Second Glorious Mystery: *The Ascension* (St. Mark 16:19)

Third Glorious Mystery: *The Descent of the Holy Ghost* (Acts of the Apostles 2:2)

Fourth Glorious Mystery: *The Assumption* (Judith 15:10-11)

Fifth Glorious Mystery: *The Coronation* (Apoc. 12:1)

We'd like to hear from YOU! Write or call:

The Editor,

Apostles of the Rosary

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